

ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Richmond, Oct. 24, 1863.

GENERAL ORDERS, }
No. 138. }

The following instructions are published for carrying into effect the 9th section of the act of 26th March 1863, to regulate impressments, in respect to labor on fortifications and other public works in states in which provisions have not been made on this subject:

1. The commanding general or the officer of engineers in charge of the work, shall have power to decide upon the necessity for making impressments of slaves for this purpose, after making suitable efforts to secure the necessary laborers by contract. He must be satisfied of the necessity of the measure before he resorts to it.

2. He may authorize the impressment of male slaves between the ages of seventeen and fifty years, but before the first day of December next shall abstain from impressing slaves from plantations exclusively devoted to the production of grain and provisions, without the consent of the owner, except in cases of urgent necessity.

3. No impressments shall be made of the slaves employed in the domestic and family service exclusively, nor upon farms or plantations where there are not more than three slaves of the age specified, and not more than five per cent. of the population of slaves shall be impressed in any county at the same time, unless the necessity is very great, and after consultation with this department or the governor of the state in which the impressment is to be made.

4. The ordinary period for impressment shall be sixty days, but if the owner of any slave shall fail to bring the slaves impressed to the place of rendezvous within five days after the time appointed, the slaves so withheld may be detained for ninety days, and for a longer term of ten days for every day of default, unless a reasonable excuse be given for the delays that have occurred.

5. It shall be the duty of the commanding general in charge of any lines requiring fortification, to acquaint himself with the resources of slave labor within his department, and to consider with care the manner in which he may obtain the control of whatever is necessary for the public service, by fair and equitable apportionment among the owners of such property. He will consult with the governor of the state and other state authorities as to the best mode of proceeding, so that his impressment may cause the least embarrassment to the industrial pursuits of the community.

6. Notices shall be given of the number and character of the slaves

required, the time and place of their delivery, the time for which the service is required, and of the arrangements made for the subsistence, management and custody of the slaves so required; and if the masters of slaves shall agree to furnish subsistence for their slaves and a suitable overseer or agent to superintend them, they shall have the privilege of so doing. But such overseers shall be subject to the control of the officer in charge, and may be dismissed for any misconduct by him.

7. The sum of twenty dollars per month for each slave delivered in pursuance to requisition, and fifteen dollars per month for each slave held in consequence of failure of his master to obey requisition made as herein before provided, shall be paid by the Confederate States, and soldiers' rations, medicines and medical attendance furnished; and the value of all such slaves as may die during their term of service or thereafter, from injuries received or diseases contracted in such service, or may not be returned, shall be paid by the Confederate States. Such value shall be conclusively established by a formal appraisement by a board of experts mutually agreed upon at the time the slaves are received into the confederate service. Compensation shall also be made for all injuries to slaves arising from the act of the public enemy, or from any injury arising from a want of due diligence on the part of authorities of the Confederate States. But the Confederate States will not be liable for any slave not returned by reason of fraud or collusion on the part of the owner or his agent, or the overseer selected by him to superintend them, nor if his death should be caused by the act of God, or by disease existing when the slave is received by confederate authorities.

8. Subsistence and provisions furnished by the owner shall be commuted for at the rates allowed soldiers in service. All slaves sent voluntarily to the confederate authorities, and accepted by them, without other special contract, shall stand on the same footing as those delivered under requisition; and the owners of all slaves delivered or taken under requisition shall be entitled to regard the Confederate States as contracting with them to comply with the obligations and conditions herein expressed.

9. In case there should be any disagreement on the subject of the value of any slave impressed, or in case the impressing officer shall not be satisfied of the accuracy of any valuation or valuations, the appraisement shall be referred to the appraisers appointed under the 5th section of the act concerning impressments, according to the provisions of the act of congress approved 27th April 1863, and published in Orders, No 53, current series.

By order.

S. COOPER,
Adjutant and Inspector General.